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ThunderClan

Leader: Featherstar- a silver tabby she-cat with soft, feathery fur and tufted ears with white toes and ice blue eyes

Deputy: Shellripple- a pale golden tom with white paws, ears, and chest with ice blue eyes

Medicine Cat: Clearspirit- a pale white tom with light gray eyes
Apprentice: Lilypaw- a cream-and-white tabby she-cat with white toes and chin and ice blue eyes

Warriors:

Foxspots- a dark russet tom with brown spots, ears, and tail tip with bright green eyes

Blackstreak- a large jet black tom with sage green eyes
Apprentice: Hawkpaw- a dark russet tabby tom with white paws and underbelly with bright brown eyes

Swiftstep- a huge, fluffy bicolor brown mackerel tabby and white tom with chocolate brown eyes

Littlebounce- a six toed brown tabby she-cat with a lighter underbelly and white chin with light brown eyes

Stripeface- a gray tom with black wars, paws, and tabby stripes on his face and tail with orange eyes
Apprentice: Coalpaw- a jet black tom with amber eyes

Raspberrypelt- a bright russet she-cat with a bright pink nose and golden eyes
Apprentice: Skypaw- a white she-cat with light gray tabby splotches and head with ice blue eyes

Charcoal- a long furred she-cat with tufted ears and orange eyes

Ivyfrost- a silver tabby she-cat with white splotches and mint green

eyes

ShadowClan

Leader: Ravenstar- a black she-cat with white spots, ears, muzzle, toes, and tail tip with bright orange eyes

Deputy: Sharkscar- a brown tabby tom with a lighter underbelly and muzzle with scarred mouth and muzzle with mint green eyes

Medicine Cat: Lightface- a white she-cat with golden tabby splotches and golden tabby tufted ears with mint green eyes

Warriors:

Palebelly- a dark gray tom with a pale gray underbelly with pale gray eyes

Addersnag- a lean, red tabby tom with light gray eyes

Shardspark- a jet black tom with gray paws and chest with dark green eyes

Slatepetal- an almost black she-cat with a white muzzle with ice blue eyes

Petalbreeze- a creamy pelted tabby she-cat with white splotches and ice blue eyes

Coppershadow- a light gray she-cat with russet splotches and ears with bright orange eyes

WindClan

Leader: Harestar- a light brown tom with light green eyes

Deputy- Applebust- a reddish cream tom with bright orange eyes

Medicine Cat: Oakpool- a light brown tabby she-cat with white splotches and socks with mint green eyes

Warriors:

Robinfire- a jet black tom with bright orange splotches and paws with bright orange eyes

Goldenflame- a golden tabby she-cat with determined green eyes

Breezehawk- a brown-and-black tom with dark brown tabby stripes and golden eyes

Coldcoat- a calico she-cat with light gray eyes

Mountainsky- a mottled gray and white she-cat with sky blue eyes

Patchshade- a thick furred black and white tom with golden eyes

RiverClan

Leader: Rushstar- a light brown tabby tom with white underbelly and paws with bright blue eyes

Deputy: Tangleroot- a dark brown tabby tom with a white twisted paw and ice blue eyes

Medicine Cat: Songwish- a pretty gray she-cat with rippling white tabby stripes and clear blue eyes

Warriors:

Troutlake- a dark gray tom with lighter tabby stripes and green eyes

Hollowstone- a light gray tom with orange eyes

Applemist- a ginger tabby she-cat with golden eyes

Mistshadow- a dark gray tabby she-cat with a white underbelly and bright blue eyes

Prologue

"Brindlelight's dead!" a wiry black apprentice wailed as he ran into camp. Cats let out shocked gasps as three others followed, holding the mangled body of Brindlelight. The killer watched from nearby, flicking its whiskers slightly in amusement, its face expressionless.

Featherstar lunged off of the highledge, her stomach flipping at the sight of her former apprentice. "What... happened?" Featherstar croaked, glancing at Stripeface.

"Coalpaw wandered off during his assessment and began following a badger tail," he growled. "I went to find Swiftstep's patrol and when I got to the edge of the scent trail, Coalpaw flew out of the ferns and told us Brindlelight had been killed by a badger. We found... her like this next to a badger set. The set is strong with badger scent."

Featherstar barely listened, but gave a feeble nod of acknowledgement. A wall of grief came from Hawkpaw as the russet tabby apprentice ran over. Skypaw followed, but paused at the sight. Stormpaw stood beside her, her pale gray eyes wide with horror.

Featherstar turned and climbed the highledge, not needing to summon the Clan, for they were already gathered.

"Cats of ThunderClan, I bring grave news," Featherstar sighed. "Brindlelight had been found, and she is hunting with StarClan now." Cats let out yowls of grief, but they were quickly silenced by Featherstar. "Unfortunately, that leaves Hawkpaw without a mentor and we cannot delay training. Blackstrike, you suffer the same grief as Hawkpaw, and you are skilled in all areas of being a warrior. You will complete Hawkpaw's training. May StarClan give Brindlelight swift hunting and plentiful prey." With that, she hopped down and padded to get former apprentice's body and laid down beside it. She pressed her nose gently into her head fur.

May whoever has done this may burn in the dark forest.

Featherstar rose to her paws and padded to her deputy. "I want a patrol organized to chase that badger out," she ordered. "We cannot afford to have a beast with the taste for cat blood in our territory."

"Very well, Featherstar," he meowed solemnly. "Blackstrike, Littlebounce, Coalpaw, Stripeface, Swiftstep! Come with me; we're chasing that savage out!" The selected warriors looked grim, but nodded their acknowledgement and followed Shellripple out of the camp.

"Move it!" Stripeface's hiss came from behind him, followed by a yelp from Coalpaw.

"Stripeface!" Littlebounce's shocked meow made Shellripple curious enough to turn around. He saw blood trickling from Coalpaw's hind leg. The black tom's ears were flattened against his head and Swiftstep was looking at the gray warrior in anger, while Blackstrike was looking with disapproval. "He's bleeding!"

"He needs to be diciplined," Shellripple called in support of his follower. Littlebounce looked over at him, appalled.

"But there was no need for claws to be unsheathed!" Littlebounce protested. Shellripple turned around and flicked his tail.

"Come on," he growled. "Let's get going before we get delayed anymore. Keep up, Coalpaw," he added over his shoulder as he trudged forward, not waiting for his patrol to follow or not. He heard their mummers of unease but heard their paw steps follow his own. Shellripple was full of grim determination to finish the deed that was about to face them. If Coalpaw couldn't handle it, then he would share the same fate as Brindlelight.

Chapter One

Stormpaw awoke with a yawn as Featherstar's yowl broke through the air. She blinked open her eyes in attempt to rid them of sleep. Dawn light filtered from outside into the apprentices' den. She got to her paws and stretched before padding outside.

The Clan was already gathering around and Stormpaw sat beside Flamepaw. Their journey from the barn flooded through her mind. She also remembered with a pang about her mentor, Foxspots, who was still trapped in Twolegplace, held prisoner by BloodClan. Stormpaw shuddered as she remembered the days she spent held captive in the alleyway. If it hadn't been for Lapis and Adder, she would still be trapped there.

"I call you here today to bring the verdict of whether we send a search party for Foxspots," Featherstar's meow broke Stormpaw from her thoughts. "I have spoken with my senior warriors and I have decided that we will send a rescue party for Foxspots."

Yowls of enthusiasm came from the Clan. A rush of relief spread through Stormpaw. *Thank StarClan!* Stormpaw breathed silently. Featherstar raised her tail for silence, and a moment later that was granted.

"ThunderClan has very few warriors to spare," she went on. "But, I have decided that this mission shall be lead by Littlebounce. Swiftstep, Blackstrike, and Hawkpaw will join her. Stormpaw, since you know where Foxspots is, you shall join them as well. Clearspirit shall brief you quickly on basic herbs and give you traveling herbs for your journey. You will leave at sunhigh. This meeting is dismissed." Featherstar climbed down the Highledge and the chosen cats gathered around one another. Hawkpaw's eyes, which had been dull since Brindlelight's death, were bright with excitement. Blackstrike looked pleased for being chosen, and Littlebounce had a glimmer of pride in her eyes. Only Swiftstep seemed unexcited.

"This is going to be dangerous," he mewed seriously. Littlebounce

reared up on her hind paws and cuffed Swiftstep playfully around the ear.

"Oh, come on, you big fluffball!" she purred. "We're not leaving yet! At least celebrate!"

"Celebrate about possibly being lead to our deaths? I'll pass," Swiftstep snorted before turning and padding towards the fresh kill pile. Stormpaw's ear flicked anxiously. How could they rescue Foxspots if they couldn't get along? Stormpaw looked over when she felt a tail rest along her back. She glanced over and saw Littlebounce.

"Don't worry," Littlebounce meowed. "Inside, Swiftstep is beaming about being chosen. He just thinks he's too cool to show it." Stormpaw let out a snort of laughter. Waving her tail in goodbye, she padded over to where Skypaw and Coalpaw all sat. Coalpaw's eyes were full of grief, a sickened expression on his face.

Featherstar looked down at her fallen warrior, Brindlelight, in grief. She glanced over to Shellripple, who was approaching. Stormpaw stiffened at the sight of him, wondering if the huge warrior was going to accuse her of sending her Clanmates into danger. But he simply ignored her, casting an expressionless gaze at Brindlelight's body before turning to Featherstar. *What was that about?* Stormpaw wondered as Featherstar quietly ordered Shellripple to organize a patrol to bury Brindlelight.

"It's too gory of a sight to sit in camp all day," she explained. "We will sit vigil for her tonight anyhow, as if she were still here."

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Sunset soon rolled around. Stormpaw sat outside of the apprentices' den, watching the cats closest to Brindlelight gather in the center of camp. Flamepaw sat on one side of Stormpaw, while Coalpaw sat on the other.

"It really is a shame what happened to Brindlelight," Flamepaw sighed. She shuffled her creamy paws. "I know I didn't know her that well, but it is still a tragedy to see."
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"Yeah," Coalpaw mewed his agreement. Stormpaw simply nodded, her head filled about what tomorrow would bring.

Coalpaw looked over at Stormpaw. "Is everything alright?" He asked. Stormpaw sighed, nodding.

"Yes. I'm just thinking about what tomorrow will bring," she sighed. Stormpaw felt paws jab her ribs and turned to see Flamepaw.

"Hey!" She scolded. "Don't be that way. The Stormpaw I know craves adventure whether you like it or not!" Though her tone was harsh, Flamepaw's emerald green eyes were bright with amusement. Stormpaw chuckled, feeling light hearted for the first time since before her abduction to BloodClan.

"Why don't we all get some sleep?" Coalpaw suggested. "Flamepaw and I are on the dawn patrol and Stormpaw, you have a big day ahead of you."

As much as she hated to admit it, Stormpaw knew she was exhausted. She had refused to sleep thus far, for she wanted as much time with her closest friends as she could. But Coalpaw was right. The jet black tom lead the way into the apprentices' den and curled up in his nest. Flamepaw, who's nest was on the other side of the den since Hawkpaw and Skypaw took the nests by Coalpaw and Stormpaw, mewed a good night before curling up. Within moments the bright orange tabby was fast asleep.

Stormpaw looked at Coalpaw. He returned her gaze with kind eyes.

"Want to share nests tonight?" Stormpaw asked shyly. "I-I kind of liked the warmth of another cat by me last night."

"Of course," Coalpaw's reply came in a purr. "I liked it too!" Stormpaw felt light headed in relief as she moved her moss closer to his. Quickly, she made Coalpaw's nest big enough to fit the both of them and she climbed in beside him, curling up. He gave her ear a quick lick and she returned the gesture by giving his cheek a lick. Coalpaw's eyes were bright in embarrassment, although Stormpaw was unable to read the other emotion in their depths.

"Good night," Stormpaw meowed as she rested her head on her paws. She felt Coalpaw's tongue rasp over her ear one more time before he meowed a soft good night. Soon after, Stormpaw was fast asleep.

Chapter Two

Stormpaw woke to a gentle paw prodding her side. She blinked open her eyes to see Coalpaw looking down at her.

"It's time," he mewed gently. "Littlebounce told me to wake you."

"Thanks," Stormpaw murmured drowsily in reply. She got to her paws and arched her back in a long stretch while Coalpaw woke Hawkpaw and Flamepaw. The four padded out of the den, all blinking sleep out of her eyes.

The journeying cats stood outside, their pelts fluffed out against the cold morning breeze. Stormpaw casted her gaze upwards and saw that the leaves were changing color. Leaf fall would be here soon, and she wondered if they would be back in time before Leafbare.

Clearspirit was talking to Littlebounce (Stormpaw assumed she was learning some basic herbs for their journey) while Lilypaw bounced around, giving bundles of herbs to each cat in turn. Stormpaw padded over to them.

"Hi!" Lilypaw chirped.

"Hi," Stormpaw yawned. "Great StarClan, how do you have this much energy? It's not even dawn!"

"Dunno," Lilypaw shrugged. "But why think about it? You should be thinking about rescuing Foxspots!" Stormpaw flicked an ear.

"I just hope he's okay," Stormpaw croaked, remembering how weak her mentor was before she had left the territory of BloodClan.

"Foxspots is strong," Lilypaw chirped, not seeming to notice the solemness in her voice. "He'll be fine."

"Stormpaw," Blackstrike's voice grabbed Stormpaw's attention. She waved her tail in farewell to Lilypaw and padded over to Blackstrike. "Eat your traveling herbs and get ready to go. We're

leaving soon." Stormpaw bent her head and obeyed, her face twisting in distaste at the herbs' foul flavor. *Yuck!* She thought irritably, flicking her tongue in her mouth in attempt to rid of the flavor.

"Come on!" Swiftstep's impatient mew sounded, his tail flicking irritably. The fluffy tabby and white bicolor tom was waiting impatiently near the camp entrance with Blackstrike by his side, although the big jet black warrior was more calm and patient looking.

"Oh for StarClan's sake, Swiftstep!" Littlebounce called in annoyance. She exchanged a few final works with Clearspirit before padding over. "Alright. Let's go, Stormpaw, Hawkpaw."

"This is it!" Hawkpaw mewed next to Stormpaw. She turned her head to see the red tabby's eyes ignited with a blaze of excitement. Stormpaw smiled lightly.

"I guess so," she meowed as the patrol left through the thorn barrier. Before she padded through, she paused to cast one last look at the camp before she followed them out.

They headed to the WindClan border. Stormpaw, who was still limping a little bit from her leg injury that she got on the way back from BloodClan, managed to keep up with the patrol. Hawkpaw's tail flicked to and fro; he was clearly excited about their quest. Stormpaw, and Swiftstep apparently, on the other paw was not. She was fearful of going back to BloodClan. She didn't want to have herself, or her Clanmates, get hurt or even possibly killed by the BloodClan savages. She shuddered in memory as she pictured the two cats killing each other by the silver cylinders back in twolegplace over the piece of slop.

"Stop!" a voice screeched, bringing Stormpaw back from her memories. The questing cats stopped, and Stormpaw looked to see a group of WindClan cats heading towards them. The leading cat was a brown and black cat with dark brown tabby stripes. He skidded to a halt in front of the ThunderClan cats, fury bright in his golden eyes.

"How dare you trespass on our territory!" he spat at Blackstrike, who was leading them. Swiftstep let out a low growl and began to step forward, but was blocked by Blackstrike's tail.

"Hold on, Breezehawk," a reddish cream tom meowed, his orange eyes curious. "Let's hear them out."

"Are you growing soft?" Breezehawk snapped, clearly angered by the newcomer's response. Stormpaw took a small step back when he unsheathed his claws on his own clanmate. "You may as well go and retire; be an elder for how useful you are!"

"Breezehawk!" the tom growled, his orange eyes growing angry. "Shut your mouth this instance; that is no way to speak to your deputy! One more word out of you and you're cleaning the elders den for a moon while Frostpaw and Rockpaw are made warriors, understand me?" Breezehawk then grunted something inaudible, and moved away. The red cream tom gave Blackstrike a curt nod.

"Greetings, Applebust," Blackstrike meowed. Stormpaw lifted a paw hesitantly, trying to decide if she should come forward again or not.

"And to you, Blackstrike," the WindClan deputy meowed. He looked at Stormpaw, a softness growing in his eyes that made Stormpaw feel a little less uneasy. "Don't worry. We won't hurt you, without reason." Breezehawk let out a snort, but was silenced with a sharp glare from Applebust.

"We wish to pass through your territory, to your border with unclaimed land," Blackstrike meowed, and when Applebust gave him a questioning look, he added, "We're on orders to investigate beyond there."

"Why?" Breezehawk sneered. "Is ThunderClan becoming bossy and special again?"

"Breezehawk-" Applebust growled.

"Actually," the third cat, a jet black tom with flame colored splotches, paws, ears, and tail tip, cut in, casting Applebust an apologetic glance. "I think it might be time to bring them to see

Harestar. If they want to go beyond *our* boundaries, then it might be a good idea to see what they're... doing," he replied carefully.

"Well said, Robinfire," Applebust sighed, nodding slowly. "Very well. Follow us, ThunderClan."

Hey everyone! Rootbeer here, and here's the long awaited update! I had some writers block for a while, but now I've finally broken free! Hope you enjoyed!